



San Carlos Focused General Plan Update

**Virtual Workshop #1
November 30, 2020**

**Workshop Summary
January 15, 2021**

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Introduction

In the spring of 2020, the City of San Carlos began efforts to draft a Focused General Plan Update. In California, all municipalities must develop a General Plan to establish how a city will grow and change over the next two decades. General Plans are required to address land use, circulation/mobility, open space, conservation, noise, environmental justice, air quality, safety, and housing. The San Carlos Focused General Plan Update will address the Housing Element and the Environmental Safety Element, both of which are required by state law to be updated by January 2023. As needed for consistency, other parts of the San Carlos General Plan may need to be updated as well, specifically, the Land Use Element. Woven throughout the Focused General Plan Update is a comprehensive community engagement program that is used to inform the plan update process and gather input from the community. This community workshop is the first of these activities to engage the community in this project. The website: www.SanCarlos2040.org contains more information about the project and its upcoming activities.

On Monday, November 30, 2020, the City of San Carlos and its consultants, MIG, hosted a public workshop to inform the community about the project and the Housing and Environmental Safety Elements and collect information from the public about their observations related to housing and environmental safety. Following guidance from public health agencies regarding public gatherings and COVID-19, the workshop was held virtually using online video conferencing. Sixty-five (65) community members and interested individuals participated. In preparation for the first virtual workshop, City staff conducted robust community outreach to encourage maximum participation. This included social media posts on Facebook, NextDoor, Instagram, and Twitter. In addition, the workshop was promoted through the City's Spotlight Newsletter, Adult Community Center Newsletter, and E-notify blasts. Finally, announcements about the project and workshop were made at public meetings including City Council, Planning Commission, Transportation and Circulation Commission, Economic Development Advisory Council, and the Youth Advisory Council.

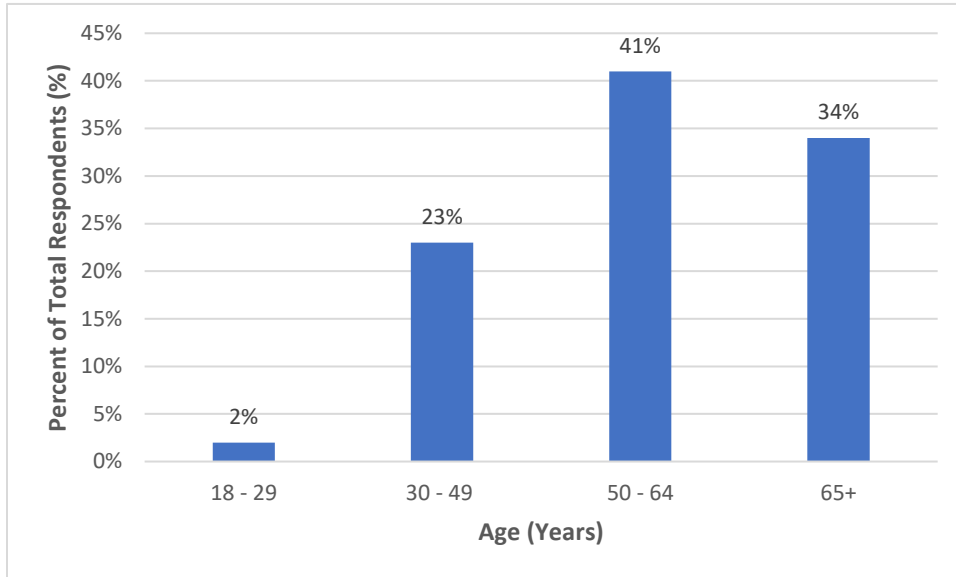
MIG planner Joan Chaplick served as the moderator and facilitated the meeting. Al Savay, Community and Economic Development Director, introduced Mayor Ron Collins. Al provided remarks to set the context and introduced the City's project team members including Lisa Porras, Planning Manager and Project Manager, and Aaron Aknin, Strategic Advisor, Principal, Good City. Co. Al also introduced Lisa Brownfield and Genevieve Sharrow from MIG who provided a presentation on the overall planning process, Housing Element and Environmental Safety Element. The workshop was highly interactive and included live polls and an interactive discussion documented in real-time using a digital whiteboard tool known as Mural. The live poll results follow in the next section; the workshop's PowerPoint presentation, chat transcript, and Mural are available in Appendix A.

Polling Questions

The workshop started off with live polling to collect some basic information about the participants and what they like about their community. The City intends to collect demographic information

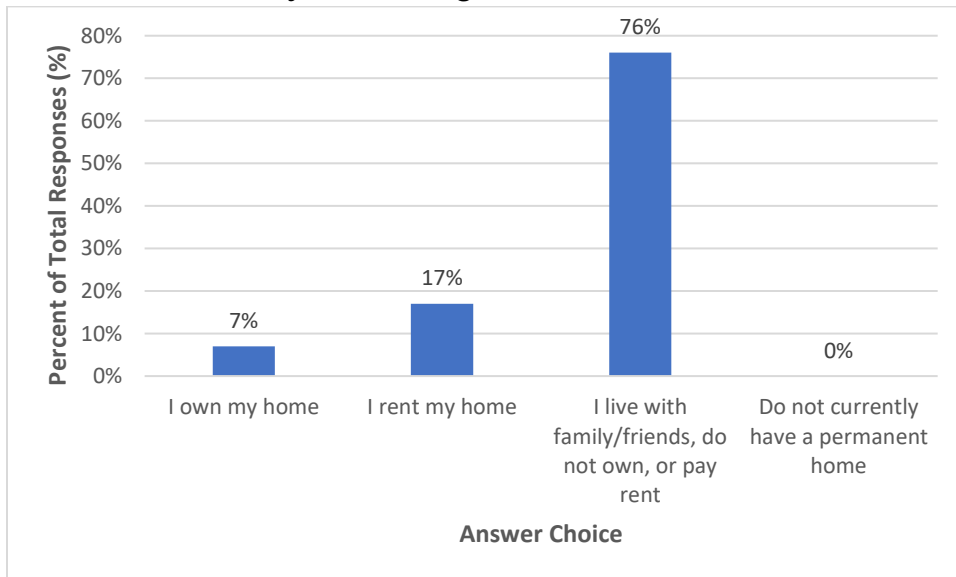
throughout the outreach process, including at all community workshops, so the City can understand who has been reached and participating throughout the life of the project. The following is a list of the questions and responses gathered.

Question 1. What is your age?



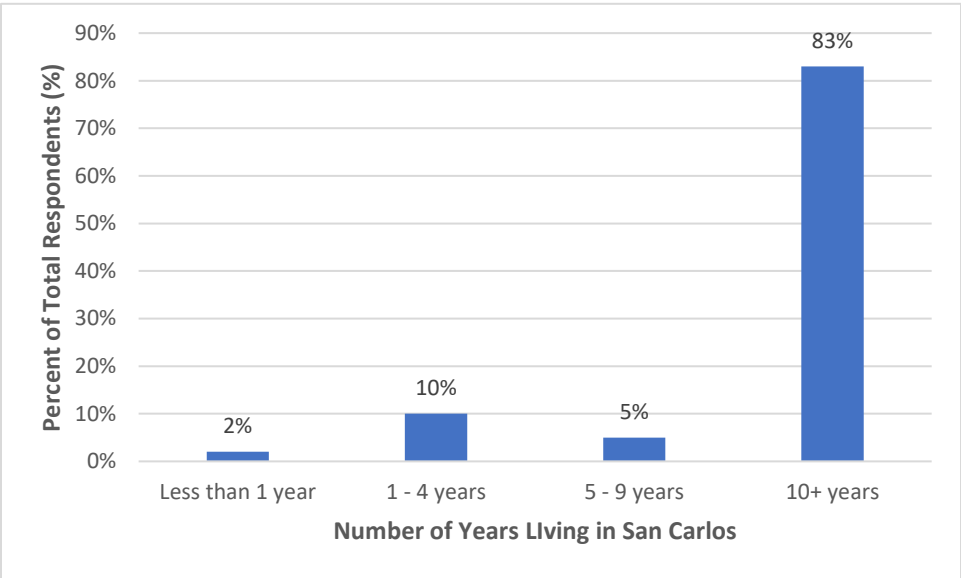
n = 44

Question 2. What is your housing situation?



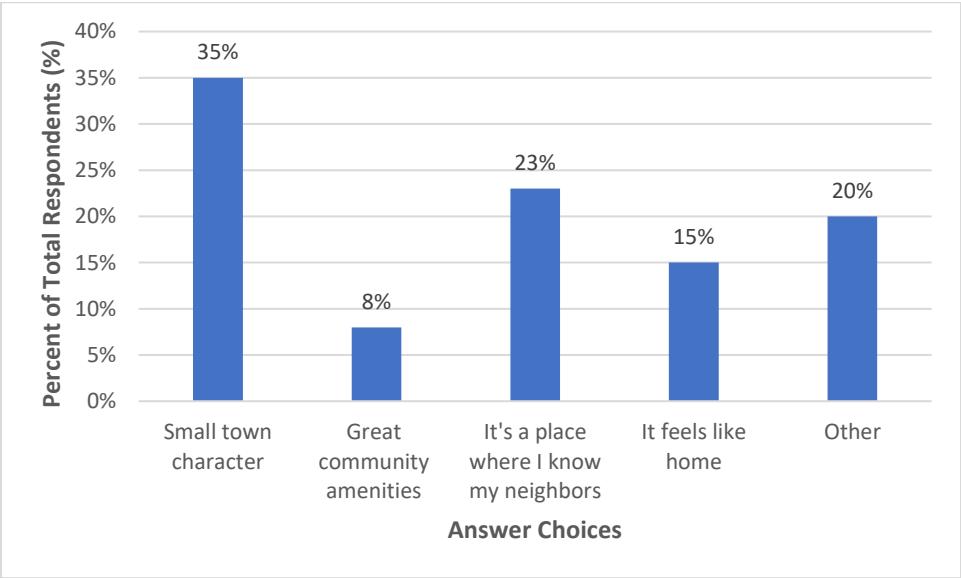
n = 42

Question 3. How long have you lived in San Carlos?



n = 41

Question 4. What do you like best about living in San Carlos?



n = 40

Question #4 was intended as an ice breaker. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number. “n” indicates the total number of responses for each question. Not all participants responded to each question.

Following the polling questions, participants were encouraged to submit their comments and questions using the “chat” feature throughout the meeting. In addition, ideas and feedback were recorded on the MURAL digital whiteboard. At the end of the workshop, a public comment period allowed participants to provide their comments verbally. Each participant had two minutes to provide oral comments. A summary of the key themes follows.

Key Themes

Key themes and takeaways from the discussion are listed below by question.

Question 1. What are your issues and concerns related to meeting the need for housing in San Carlos?

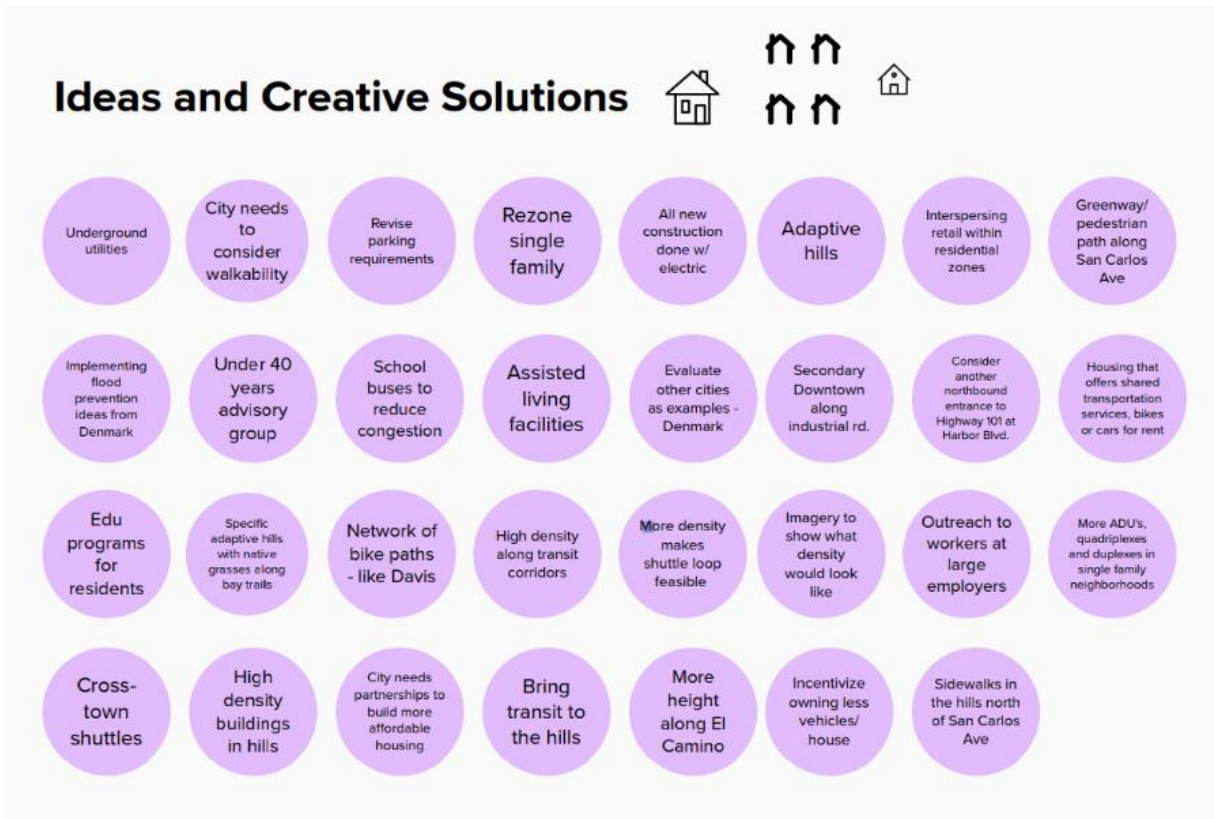
- **Access to Transit** – Concern about potential impacts to traffic and would like new housing to be accessible to public transportation. Improve multi-modal transit, including public transportation, biking, and pedestrian accessibility.
- **Aesthetics** – Concern about the design and aesthetic impacts of new housing. Desire for new housing to be high quality and well-designed.
- **Coordination with Agencies** – Question about San Carlos joining the Joint Powers Authority or coordinating with Caltrain.
- **Density** – Concern about the impacts of density and additional housing, such as increased traffic and congestion.
- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions** – Avoid increasing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and ensure that new buildings do not use gas fueled furnaces, water heaters, or stoves. Use solar panels for new housing.
- **Housing for Seniors** – Create additional housing for seniors.
- **Implications of Single-Family Zoning** – Note the historical injustices and inequities amplified and perpetuated by single-family zoning and asked the City to consider the equity implications of preserving single-family zoning.
- **Infrastructure** – Concern around impacts to wastewater facilities and City infrastructure overall.
- **Open Space** – Balance new development with the needs for open space. More green space is needed on the east side.
- **Schools** – Question about how local schools will need to accommodate growth.
- **Sprawl** – Avoid sprawl and develop higher densities in strategic locations.
- **Wildfires** – Concern new housing, particularly high-density development in the hills, could lead to wildfires. Suggest putting utilities underground to prevent wildfires.

Figure 1. Segment of Mural with Question 1 Notes

Housing Issues and Concerns 							
Can ADU's be placed in front yards?	Density & traffic concerns w/ additional housing	Build bazillion micro units on east side	how will schools accommodate growth	More multi-family and mix-used zoned areas	Build high-density housing in hills (not only flats)	Balance need for open space	High density in hills could lead to wildfires
Open more land to multi-family connected to transit	Fourplex is a blessing - open up more areas that can accommodate	Opportunity to build higher than 4-stories?	Increased density must have access to transit	Dorm style housing and ADU's are an eyesore	Add more units near downtown for seniors	Make sure new buildings don't have gas fueled furnaces, water heaters and stoves - need increasing GHG emissions	As we look at density housing let's maintain the character of our small community
Avoid sprawl - more density and height	Improve multi-modal transit and biking and pedestrian accessibility and mobility	Schools are suffering due to soaring housing costs	Consider joining the Joint Powers Authority ...	Any coordination w/ Caltrain	Is infrastructure (power and sewer) sufficient to accommodate more housing?	Duplexes and Triplexes	
Consider equity implications for maintaining single-family housing	Current single-family codes make ADU's difficult	Need to maintain green recreation spaces	New development brings in tax revenue to support additional services	Don't build higher than 4-stories	High density housing is ok in some places but not others; should be done tastefully	Encourage shared living	
Large commercial development proposed can serve as resource	Can wastewater facilities handle increased pop?	How to balance open spaces and housing	Consider implications of preserving single-family zoning	Large lot setbacks since the last element was adopted, how will this be different?	City should work w/ county and nonprofit to build affordable housing	New housing should meet reach codes, address existing housing	
Advisory committee made up of affordable housing developers	Hard to have open space and low height	Parking requirements for denser housing should be revised	Revising parking requirements	Consider solar for new housing	More green space needed on east side	Underground utilities to prevent wildfires	

Question 2. What ideas do you have for meeting the need?

Figure 2. Segment of Mural with Question 2 Notes



- **Accessory Dwelling Units** – Build new accessory dwelling units (ADUs).
- **Advisory Group** – Form an Under 40 Advisory Group to collect input from younger residents.
- **Assisted Living Facilities** – Provide additional assisted living facilities.
- **City Requirements** – Revise City requirements such as parking.
- **Collaboration** – Collaborate with nonprofits and the County to build affordable housing.
- **East Side** – Develop more housing on the east side of San Carlos.
- **Incentives** – Incentivize owning fewer vehicles and residential development.
- **Increase Density** – Increase density throughout San Carlos (e.g., El Camino). Create visualizations to show what higher densities might look like.
- **Infrastructure** – Add another northbound entrance to Highway 101 at Harbor Boulevard.
- **International Case Studies** – Suggest looking at what other cities are doing around housing and flood prevention, including international cities in places such as Denmark.
- **Mixed-Use Development** – Intersperse retail uses within residential zones.
- **Multi-Family Housing** – Suggest a variety of multi-family housing types such as duplexes, triplexes, high-density multi-family developments, micro-units
- **Multi-Modal Transportation** – Participants would like to see comprehensive multi-modal transportation systems including a network of bike paths, pedestrian paths, greenway, and cross-town shuttle buses. High-quality transit should be available in all areas, including the hills.

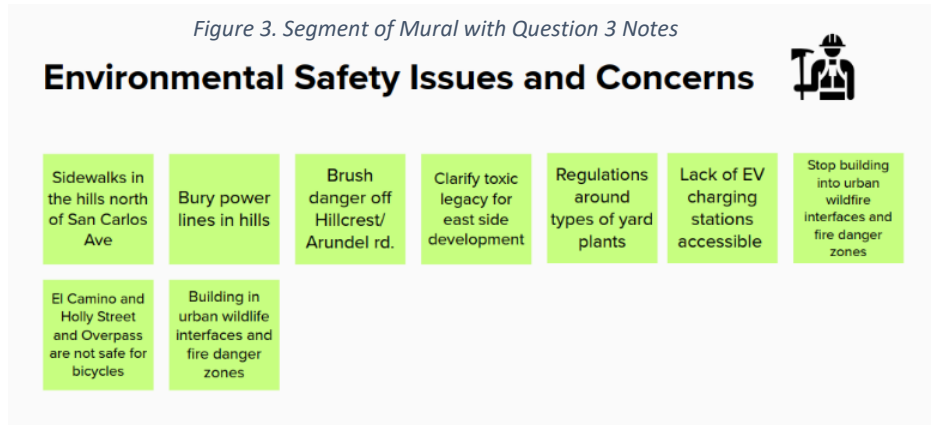
- **Outreach and Engagement** – Conduct outreach and engage stakeholders, including workers. Develop educational programs for residents.
- **Re-Zone** - Re-zone and upzone strategic areas of San Carlos.
- **Transit Oriented Development** – Build new housing along high-quality transit corridors.
- **Walkability** – Develop accessible and walkable neighborhoods.

Question 3. What are your concerns and ideas regarding environmental safety?

- **Active Transportation** – Missing sidewalks in the hills north of San Carlos Avenue. Overpass at El Camino and Holly Street is not safe for bicycles.

- **Bury Power Lines** – Bury power lines in the hills.

- **Electric Vehicles Charging Stations** – Develop a system of electric vehicle charging stations.
- **Plants** – Develop regulations around the types of yard plants.
- **Toxic Legacy** – Clarify the toxic legacy of east side development.
- **Wildfire** – Concern about wildfire. Stop building into the urban wildfire interfaces and fire danger zones.



Question 4. Any creative solutions for the City to consider?

- **Flooding** – Restore the areas natural creeks and marshlands, develop green infrastructure, and develop a levee system at San Carlos Airport to address flooding. Develop flood prevention strategies and study international case studies.
- **Incentives**– Incentivize the replacement of gas appliances with electric options.
- **Native Plants** – Encourage drought tolerant and native landscaping and plant native grasses along bay trails.

Figure 4. Segment of Mural with Question 4 Notes



- **Open Space** – Develop pockets of green and open space.
- **Reach Codes** – Adopt “reach” codes.
- **Sea-Level Rise** – Develop plans and funding strategies to address sea-level rise. Improve the existing sea wall.
- **Shared Transportation Services** – Develop housing with shared transportation services.
- **Wildfire** – Develop and facilitate fire evacuation routes. Regulate parking to facilitate fire evacuation. Install cameras to observe fire prone areas. Reestablish fire department reviews for single-family residential (SFR) properties.

Next Steps

The City and MIG will share workshop results with the public and incorporate input into the development of the San Carlos Housing and Environmental Safety Elements. The next workshop is scheduled for January 20, 2021, 6:30 - 8:30 pm.